



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS pleads with Traditional Leaders to help end unlawful river sand mining

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Illegal water use activities through sand mining has been escalating in KwaZulu-Natal and the department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has turned to traditional leaders to educate about unlawful water use through sand mining and to assist identify illegal sand miners and report transgressors.

This was part of the message that the Minister Nomvula Mokonyane presented when she addressed traditional leaders during a stakeholder engagement on unlawful water use through sand mining on Friday, 20 October 2017 in Durban.

Speaking to the delegates Mokonyane said the country needs to proactively root out unlawful water use, non-compliance to water use authorisation and water leaks. In addition, she said abiding by the law and authorisations will assist in achieving our vision of equitable and sustainable water.

The department was engaging with traditional leaders in an effort to stop the degradation of rivers and impact on water infrastructure and supply.

“The unlawful water use through sand mining has contributed to the drought and water shortage problems in the province. Some of these sand miners block the water flow, and in some areas this affects dam the water. The results are that water from the dams cannot reach the abstraction point of the drinking water supply. Illegal sand miners are making millions without even pay tax. And they block rivers from flowing freely. This is why today we are here to improve understanding of the impacts on unlawful water use through sand mining, educate traditional leaders on legislative requirements for engaging on sand mining activities and also to get buy in to educate communities about unlawful sand mining,” she said.

The province is currently facing unlawful water use activities through sand mining in rivers such as Illovo river, Umzumbe river, UMthwalume river, UMvoti river, Buffalo river, UMdloti river, Amatikulu river, UMhlathuze river, Umfolozi river and uMgeni river.

The department has been doing numerous operations and raids to try and stop transgressors jointly with other relevant authorities including District and Local Municipalities, National Prosecuting Authority, Department of Mineral Resources, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs and the South African Police Services.

While the department continues to enforce in order to stop unlawful water use activities through various means including administrative actions, opening of criminal cases and application of court interdicts, it has noted that the perpetrators disregard these enforcement actions and continue to benefit millions of rands from selling the river sand to the construction and hardware companies, at the cost of the local communities who end up incurring the charge for the restoration of water resources.

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